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A

SERMON

DELIVERED IN

ST. GEORGE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH,
SOUTHWARK,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, AUG. 11TH., 1850.

BY

THE RIGHT REV. N. WISEMAN, D.D.
BISHOP OF MELIPOTAMUS, V. A. L.

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PRICE ONE SHILLING.

NOTICE.

The following Sermon was preached so recently before the departure of the author for Rome, that he was wholly unable to peruse the short-hand writer's notes, or to superintend the printing and publishing of it. He has, however, determined not to delay the publication, though at the risk of errors of the press, as well as in the substance of the Discourse.

EVENING SERMON.

"BLESSED ARE THE EYES THAT SEE THE THINGS WHICH YOU SEE; FOR I SAY TO YOU, THAT MANY PROPHETS AND KINGS HAVE DESIRED TO SEE THE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE SEEN, AND HAVE NOT SEEN THEM; AND TO HEAR THE THINGS THAT YOU HEAR, AND HAVE NOT HEARD THEM."—Luke x. 23, 24.

The Church of God, my Brethren, is at all times so glorious;—so varied are its beauties, whether they arise from persecution and tribulation, or from exaltation and prosperity, that there is no age, there has been no time, in which these words could not have been spoken to the existing Church—of which it could not be said that they who had gone before, or they who should come after, would have gladly lived to have seen the wonders which God had wrought at that particular time. Who for a moment can doubt that a Jerome or an Augustine, when he paced the silent catacombs, and saw there the records of the glorious and noble days of martyrs' triumphs, felt like the soldier who had been withheld from the battle, and who would gladly rush into the fray, and win those laurels, even at the risk of life and limb? They envied those who beheld the noble contests of the Lawrences and the Agneses, and saw the Church, in her humiliation indeed, but still in the prime of her strength, and of whom they were in some sort jealous. Who believes not that often, even in the silence of their prison, or amidst the winding labyrinths of those

subterranean churches, they often raised their hands and eyes to God, exclaiming, in the words of the Prophet, and saying, “Lord, Thy salvation we expect, longing for the day to come when the Church shall be glorious and splendid as she deserved?”—that they might behold, with all the development of Imperial magnificence, those holy rites which also appeared so sublime when witnessed in the silence and the darkness of those their subterranean temples. And so it has been in every time;—there has been much which we should have loved to see in the ages which have preceded us;—and I believe, even, that every Catholic feels some regret that he did not live just sufficiently early at least, as some who survive amongst us have done, to be able to compare that state of prostration, of humiliation, and almost of discouragement, in which our fathers lived, that so we might have felt more keenly in the contrast, the great things which God hath done in our time as compared with that of our fathers, who laid themselves to rest in the expectation of no glory but that which the final resurrection should show them in a better world. Oh! if they could have foreseen that their children would assemble to worship God, as we are met this day, openly and fearlessly, and not without somewhat of our ancient triumph, they would have asked perhaps, that their days might be prolonged a few years more, and that they might sing their *Nunc dimittis* when they had but caught the first glimpse of the dawn of God’s salvation wrought for His people. Then let each generation in its turn, before its particular privilege should be withdrawn, or changed with passing time into another manifestation of divine goodness,—let each generation seize, as it passes by,

the glory, and the greatness, and the mercy which have been accorded to it; that so it may thank God—not for what He did for its fathers, not for what He performed in the ancient Church, not for what it may hope will come hereafter,—but for that which, in its own time and in behalf of itself, has been done by God; that so we may not be found to have omitted that proper gratitude which belongs to our days, nor leave it to others to envy us for blessings which shall no longer be theirs, and of which we shall not have been conscious.

What, then, are the great and wonderful dealings of God in our regard, and which generations that come after us shall envy our eyes for having seen—what are the things which we have heard which others will long that it had been given to them to hear?

It may strike us at once, my Brethren, that there has been much of external development of religion amongst us, which forms a characteristic of our special period. We may cast our eyes around this very church in which we are assembled, and say, Have we not here a visible manifestation of God's wonderful dealings with us? Do we not see, on every side, rising and risen around us churches and institutions of charity or of religious life, which will fill future generations with amazement, to think how, in so short a time, all this should have been done? And will not this be the age then characterized as that in which God's House, beaten down and clean destroyed, has been raised up once more, if not in magnificence commensurate with our will, at least with a modest splendour equal to our power? Oh! my Brethren, these are the works of man, and works in which indeed a wonderful Providence has had the chiefest influence—in which

we may read the great dealings of God's mercy in our behalf: but it is not to what we or our right hand may do, that God wishes us to turn in order to read the greatness of His mercies; these are not the things for which future generations, which may surpass us a thousand fold, will be jealous of our present existence—it is not more than a mere instinct of the Church, belonging to every time, to every country, instantly when it recovers peace, to restore that which has been destroyed—to rebuild the waste places of Jerusalem, and once more to restore worship to its proper dimensions and beauty. It matters not whether it be in this form or the other, whether we produce temples and edifices of any special construction, or conformable to any given rules. Those are the accidents of the taste and the spirit of the age; and it matters not of what form externals may be, the spirit is the same; and we have seen but too truly how, in our times, this external development has been almost as much displayed in others as in ourselves; and we have witnessed indeed how truly attention to all the minutiae of that which is very correct in our estimation in this regard, is paid as much by those to whom such details are useless and meaningless, as by us, to whom they are full of mystical signification, and by whom they are applicable to their proper purposes,—it is not these for which we should feel that we may be thankful, as though God's power had been manifested especially in our regard;—we must cast our eyes rather to that which has been purely, entirely, the work of God; we must seek out in His dealings with us, not in our dealings with Him, for the manifestation of those special characteristics by which this age and this country will be marked in the History of the

Church. And I would say, that, in order to trace the wonderful workings of God's Providence with regard to the expansion and increase of true Catholic religion in this country, we must carry our thoughts back to rather a remoter period than that on which we are inclined to fix our thoughts; and we must examine, first, what may be called the outward, or historical course of events in regard to our religion; and then that to which may more properly be referred the action of its innate energies.

It is not, my Brethren, much beyond a time within the recollection of some even who are here present, that there existed not in this country what was considered even the smallest germ of Catholicity capable of producing any growth—of increasing to any magnitude. We must naturally be convinced, that if, humanly, there is any extra manifestation of power to be made, the source, the origin, the instrument, must be on the spot on which it hath to work. The idea that a root may exist in one land, and the tree be produced in another, and arise to anything like mature growth, and produce abundant fruit, would only provoke a smile. And this was precisely our case at the period to which I allude, that which immediately preceded the commencement of this century. With the exception of one or two very retired and hidden religious establishments, which had ventured into this country almost by stealth at an earlier period, and which carefully withdrew themselves from the public view, and confined themselves to female education, there was not in this country a single ecclesiastical or religious establishment from which it might be supposed that anything like energetic action might go forth, and in which might be in any way

concentrated those powers which were necessary to act upon the growing population of this immense country with any chance of effect. Every college was in a foreign country ; every religious community had also been banished to a foreign soil ; and thither we were obliged to send every child who had to receive a Catholic education beyond that which might be accorded to the very poorest in the land ;—from that land every priest who had to exercise his ministry must needs come, and, moreover, must come breaking his way through the hedge of armed observation, and a cruel law which permitted none such to penetrate the country save at the risk of life. And what was the necessary consequence ? That habits, that feelings, that thoughts were become entirely foreign ; that the hearts of men were estranged from those who drove them thus with ignominy from their native soil. They came back almost with a feeling that it was a war of aggression which they had to carry on ; and when in the country, the whole of their action was confined to gliding silently in by night from house to house, where there had remained some spark of Catholic life, and there to fan it, if perchance it might be barely kept alive, but without the hope, without the thought almost, that it would ever spread, or ever communicate its benign influence to those even who were at hand. This was Catholic life up to that period ; and had any thoughtful man said to himself, England cannot be allowed to remain any longer in this state ; it is our duty, as Catholics, to exert every influence to bring back our countrymen to a participation in the same faith ;—but how is this possible—how can it be done ? He would have replied, There is only one means of doing so ; those institutions by

which religion is to be propagated, must be planted in the heart of the land ;—those great examples of virtue, those magnificent institutions of charity, which show forth what the truly Catholic Church and Catholic Religion are, must be brought within the sight, within the touch of man ; and the ministers of the Gospel, who have to diffuse its doctrines, must learn how to speak them in their own tongue ; must be brought and bred up in contact with the people whose hearts they have to gain ; they must follow the current, daily changing, of thought and feeling, and must be able to seize the passing opportunity, in order to take advantage of it, for enlightening their minds ; and all this is impossible, without this great work of bringing into the very midst of the country, nay, dispersing all over it, those various centres of Catholic life, those various roots of Catholic propagation, that so, springing up everywhere, they may be by uniform action carried along the whole surface of the country.

But who will undertake this great, this gigantic work ? Imagine the proposition to have been made, and to have been made within but few years of that tremendous period, when on the very spot where we are now assembled, a single nobleman was able to collect a mob, and to inflame it sufficiently to go from chapel to chapel through London, and destroy each by fire, and even to give to the flames the very dwelling-houses of those who were reputed or recognized as Papists or Catholics. Suppose that but a few years after this—before, in fact, ten years had passed from that period, it had been said to the Catholics in every part of Europe, Destroy and break up every one of your institutions ; you virgins of the Lamb, consecrated for years on that very spot, and before

that altar at which you daily worship, who have passed years of sweet tranquillity there, leave those cloisters which you have vowed to make your inviolable home, and go forth as victims of zeal to your native country; dispose of, if the Government which has given you its hospitality will permit you, those possessions which you have, and see if you cannot establish yourselves in that country which hates you and has driven you from itself,—which, instead of holding out the hand of welcome to greet you, will repel you by legal force from its very shores.

Go and tell those religious men, round the walls of whose cloisters are to be seen,—(and they are objects of holy envy as they pass along,)—the faithful likenesses of their Fathers in Christ, bearing each a halter round his neck, or a knife in his chest, to show that every one who went and landed here, went not only with the prospect, but almost with the certainty of martyrdom; and that none returned to whisper words of encouragement and hope;—bid them to go,—not merely to follow their footsteps into danger and into death, for that they will do,—but as rash speculators upon mere human hopes, without a call from Providence, without an invitation from above, without an encouragement from the Church; bid them destroy that which for three hundred years has been hospitably given them as shelter, and to come and see if they may not pitch their tabernacles in the midst of a country, which as yet talks of the monk and of the friar as of monsters of iniquity, and as the fomenters of dissension and rebellion, and as the demon that spreads the dark cloud of ignorance over society and the hearts of men. Or go to those other colleges in which for generations the youth has been

nerved to the scaffold and the rack, as much as he has been trained in mind to human and divine learning, and tell them all that the time has come when they must needs get rid of those yet splendid piles in which they could pursue their path of knowledge undisturbed ; to leave that Church in which they had received their solemn dedication to God, those cells, every one of which has become in course of time a martyr's shrine, with the name perhaps over it of one who from the humble couch which is there, had proceeded to the hard meeting of the justice of this country, by which he had been laid upon a cruel rack and had passed to the scaffold of one of our English cities. Would such a proposition have been treated otherwise than as absolute madness? Would it not have been said that every consideration opposed so mad a scheme ; that there was no reason to suppose that there would be better welcome given them than there would have been years before, but from recent events every motive to augur even worse? That not merely common human prudence, but every sacred feeling of attachment to the place of present security granted by Divine Providence under the most trying circumstances ; of gratitude to those countries, those states, which had so kindly and charitably nursed them till now ; that every imaginable motive from love of God and of man, forbade them to think of so insane and so impracticable a scheme? And yet that scheme was necessary. It was not a matter of prudent choice to be adopted or omitted, but it was an absolute necessity for the smallest chance of a revival of Catholicity in this country.

Then, it was not a work of man. There was but

one Power, which, over-ruling every consideration, good and rash, with equal might, could bring that about, without which there was no hope for us in this land. And even so, had one calculated upon the possible dealings of Providence to effect this work, we might, and, indeed, must have sadly failed in estimating by what means such a work could possibly be achieved; for we might have said: There may arise in one kingdom or empire, like Austria, a reforming monarch, an enemy to ecclesiastical establishments, who will suppress them in his dominions; or, there may come a war against our country in another,—although such calamities have passed by without affecting us,—and it may be thought proper to banish all the inmates of such communities as exist in that land. But the Catholic colleges, and monasteries, and convents, were dispersed over the whole of Europe; they existed in the Low Countries, and in France, and in Bavaria, and in Italy, and in Spain, and in Portugal; and was it possible to imagine a course which, at the same instant, should produce the same effect in every one of those lands? And yet, that was the agency which God actually did choose for that purpose; He put in motion the very whirlwind of His might, which destroyed, and annihilated, and left not a wreck on which to stand. He excited in a neighbouring country a furious revolution, which involving at once the Crown and the Church in a general hatred and successive measures of destruction, combined with a national antipathy and even hostile intentions in regard to this country, who sympathised with at least one of those fallen powers, spared not within the sphere of its mighty destructive action, one single institu-

tion of Catholic English piety. For, as you well know, its power was not confined to that one country, but, like the torrent that swells until it has burst over each bank, and broken down every dyke raised to oppose its progress, the inundation spread with fury and annihilating energy over the whole of Europe. Every single country where they had emigrated was visited by the scourge, and in every one the same measures took place; so that in the course of hardly two or three years the inmates of every college, of every convent with hardly an exception, and of every religious house, were driven back in spite of themselves, ruined, poverty-stricken, like men who would find themselves after a storm has passed over, left upon what to them was no longer their native land.

It is no exaggeration, my Brethren, for us to look upon that which God so fearfully permitted, as intended for this wonderful purpose; because while on the one hand the necessity of what occurred must be convincing upon any mind who sees how from this one event has sprung up all that our hearts now exult in; on the other, there was no power within ourselves, nor even in others, by peaceable and rational ways to accomplish that measure of absolute necessity. And though at the time men were overwhelmed by the suddenness and the magnitude of the calamity, and it appeared as if all the hopes of the Catholic religion were utterly destroyed for this country, yet we do indeed now see how truly the works of God, even when most terrible, are most beneficial and most merciful; and how this, like so many other events in the history of the Church, is one of those cases in which He strikes that He may

heal ; in which He kills, that He may again restore to life ; and it gives to us now that great and comforting hope, that from what is happening at present over the Continent of Europe, there will be read one day a lesson as beautiful and as consoling as there has been in the past ; and dismayed and perplexed as we may now be, when we shall look back upon it from the watch-tower of the future, we shall conclude as we do now, when we look back upon the ruins of Babel or of Ninive, that the wrecks of the proudest works of man's hand, are the noblest monuments of a benign and Sovereign Providence.

But the kindness and mercy of God in this respect, did not by any means end here ; for, even looking back at this moment upon what then occurred, I own that I cannot bring myself to believe that there was the slightest hope of the welcoming hand being stretched forth to those poor exiles of Religion who had been for three hundred years treated, not as strangers, but as busy traitors to their native land. A welcome was not given to them : there was no encouragement ; there was but little kindness ; they crawled upon the coast from the wreck as a mariner might, who knew not whether he had landed upon a hospitable shore ; they dispersed themselves and hid themselves as it were, in the very caverns of their own land ; and it was not but by degrees that they crept forth and joined again, to see if it were possible again to build up the ruins of the past. And still their thoughts turned ever to peace restored in foreign climes, and to the chance of returning once more to those halls and those sacred buildings which were dear to their memories and to their thoughts, and hallowed by the recollection of the preceding gene-

rations. But God was pleased that the shock of the immense volcano, which thus scattered on every side the fragments of the religious civilization of the Continent, should fall also upon others not our countrymen, who at least had a claim upon hospitality, because it was a claim upon the more generous sympathies of Britons. That clergy who shared in the destruction which fell upon us and our institutions, came as suppliants to these shores, strangers who spoke not our own tongue; men, many of them venerable in aspect, and in years, and in virtue; and some who had escaped from the prison, and even from the very axe of the executioner; men so modest in their claims, so meek and patient in their demeanour, so enlightened in their minds, so highly gifted in their education, so truly Christian and Catholic, that it would indeed have been a blot past cancelling upon the history of our country, had they not been welcomed and cheered. And the greatest of England's orators raised up his voice, not merely to shield them, for, thank God, that was not necessary, but to show himself their patron and their admirer. And thus there was, as it were, a diversion given to the public thought, and thus likewise were means taken to prepare for the work here, which could not have been boldly begun by ourselves. They were like the light 'skirmishers sent forth before the battle, who acted without any given plan, without any definite rule, but here and there, wherever each of them dropped; or, like the grain of mustard seed which fell into the soil and sprung up, it produced around it a small, but still, even to this day, in most instances, an enduring sphere of Catholicity, a point of action. And who could complain; who

could find fault with men who had gradually even endeared themselves in the very families of those naturally most opposed to them, and who gave no symptoms of aught but virtue and holiness, which could bring nothing but blessings upon those who should bless them? And in the mean time, the phalanx was formed, and there were rising on every side new institutions,—God knows how! God knows whence the means were obtained, whence the spirit was excited; but still, first almost in an humble cottage, and then perhaps in a larger edifice, and then at last in a more substantial, perennial, structure, each college began to resume the course of its education; each religious house to form itself according to the rules of its Order; and England found itself occupied through the whole land, it scarce knew how, by firm and well conducted institutions, every one of which was as a strong-hold, as a fort cast up and strongly occupied in the very heart of the country from which there was no chance of expulsion, and from which it was but to be expected that the most energetic action of Catholic zeal and Catholic charity would expand and spread on every side.

Such, my brethren, was the great work of the beneficent Providence external to ourselves, but preparing and disposing all things for that which was to ensue. And now, after that, I ask you to consider in what way it is, that our religion has been spreading gradually, but surely, in this country;—spreading so, that I cannot believe that there is at this day any one so blinded by prejudice, or by his wishes, as to think for an instant of denying that fact;—an increase of numbers, and establishments, an increase of activity, of zeal, of fervour; an increase, likewise,

not confined to any particular class of men ; but ranging through the whole of society, and embracing the great and noble, as well as the poor ; the learned and thoughtful, as much as the ignorant and unreflecting ; and the clergy, and those whom every human tie might bind to another system, as well as those who have full liberty, and unimpeded action. The fact I assume, and I ask how this has taken place ? Woe ! my brethren, woe to the day, if it should ever come, in which any Catholic shall presume to say, that this has been the work of ourselves, —that it is to be attributed in any way to any combined plan amongst us, to any especial spirit of unity of action, beyond what the oneness of Catholic principle must necessarily inspire us with ;—woe to the day in which Catholics glory, as though it were their work,—the spread of their religion ; for so sure as they shall thus take to themselves, or any of them, that glory which is God's, and God's alone, then so surely may you expect to see that glory fade away, and some sad reverse come to prove to us, that no skill, and no power, and no zeal of ours, has had aught to do with,—not what we are sometimes too inclined to call, the crisis,—but with the gradual and better regulated growth of religion, which shows that it is not the crude and precocious production of any extraordinary skill or effort ; but that it is the natural and spontaneous action of an innate energy, in which man may plant, and man may water, but God alone can give the increase. And we shall see how truly this is the case, if we only consider a few of the obstacles and difficulties which Catholicity hath had to contend with during these latter years, more particularly than at any other period, in this country. For I will

take it for granted, even that persecution and trial with the Church of God are a means of increase ; that what had become in ancient learning a very axiom, that “ the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,” is as true now, and is as true here as ever in any place it was ; and that, therefore, instead of considering a state of some amount of persecution, provided it be not absolutely crushing, as an obstacle, we ought rather to consider it as a means under heaven, of advancing the interests of religion.

But what we have had to contend with in these later times, are just the very obstacles which we might suppose the Catholic religion in this country would have most to fear. And first, these have been times of growing science, of increasing intellect, of the very adoration of human reason. The spirit of the age, if we are to believe not only what is told us, but what we see around us, is an enquiring and a searching spirit. It is one which tries to seek out first causes ; it is one which has ransacked every hidden treasure-house of science ; has dragged forth principles which before were unknown, and has applied them, in every possible way, to the explanation of phenomena. Now if one objection to the Catholic religion, more than another, has prevailed, has been popular and admitted, it has been this, that he who wishes to become a Catholic, must achieve a conquest over his own intellectual powers, if they oppose the simple teaching of faith ; that, in many instances, he must be content to take the simple truth as it is taught him, without attempting to investigate its more hidden relations with nature, or with man himself ; and that the doctrines of the Catholic religion, are based upon the principle of authority alone ; while

those of what is considered a more intellectual religion, allow a freer play to the faculties of man.

Now, if those principles, when they were much less cultivated, when they were much less pressed forward, were considered hostile to the growth of the Catholic belief, to the progress of Catholic interests ; how much less should we have expected the Catholic religion to make progress, when this principle had been carried out to its very utmost, and when it had become almost the all-absorbing ground upon which investigation could be conducted? If, in former times, the mysteries, and those peculiarly which the Catholic Church holds, were impugned, because the researches of science were supposed to be hostile to them, how much more might we have expected to be made of this argument, when those principles were so much more understood? Now, my Catholic brethren, have we done aught to meet this new, and even in other pursuits, overwhelming force? Have we appealed to the intellects of men? Have we been employed for these last twenty or thirty years in the discussion of natural phenomena, in the dissection and analysis of abstract reasoning in order to meet these objections? Or, rather, have we not been content to allow much indeed to be said, which might be painful to us, but without descending into a minute and, as we felt it, unprofitable contest? We knew too well the grounds of our truth ; we knew too well the strength and validity of our argument ; we felt too much confidence in the simple power and energy of the revealed doctrine, to consider it necessary to descend into a minute defence and explanation of it. We have not addressed ourselves to those sciences in the least, for the purpose of meeting any objections which might

arise against us ; and yet, while it is supposed, while it is boasted, that the intelligence of man is becoming more and more expanded ; while it is believed or taught that the principles, hidden and abstruse, of nature, are more accurately known ; yet, that very religion which is supposed to have in those two its most powerful enemies, has made progress, has advanced, has walked completely over this field of science, without deigning to remove a stone or an obstacle from before its way. And it has walked over it not alone ; but accompanied and followed by men of high and noble intellect—by men of varied and deep research, who have unhesitatingly recognised the truth of the doctrine, in spite of every objection, and have only increased the triumphal procession of the church over this, as over every other, field of contest.

And further, my brethren, the time in which we have lived, has been one of a daily increasing attention to the mere interests of this world. Huge enterprises have absorbed a great part of the mental energy of the age. Never has what may be called the materiality of human pursuits, taken such a great, and such a magnificent aspect as in this our time. And if many have worshipped intellect, oh ! how many have worshipped gold ! Doubts, disputes about religion, are not the fashion, are not according to the feelings of the day. For one controversial discussion, for one work of a polemical character, which has taken place, or appeared in this our time, there would have been twenty, or twenty thousand, in a corresponding period at any former time ; because men have ceased to trouble themselves upon these subjects ; they are generally

content to go on their own way. But the greater part are so taken up with the interests of this world, and consider them of so much higher importance than the mere abstractions of religious truth, that the latter is little cared for when placed side by side with the other. It is too true, my brethren, and we see it every day, that whatever brings with it the character of worldliness, carried to an extreme, in some way attracts towards itself the admiration, almost the affections, and certainly the desires and jealousies of men, while what has merely a moral or religious interest, is considered scarcely worthy of notice. It has been decreed in the course of the last very few years, by the sovereign voice of this nation, that if the Head of the Catholic religion,—he who is like Melchisedech, at once the priest and the king;—he whose priestly character is recognised necessarily by the very established church of these realms;—he whom the learned divines of that establishment, those who have at all earnestly studied history, or the constitution of the church, recognise as the first christian pontiff, as possessing the very highest place in the hierarchy of the church;—it has been decreed, I repeat, by the voice of the legislature of this nation, that if he, for any high and great purpose, were to send into this country a representative of himself, and naturally for that purpose seek one invested with the same sacred character which forms his true greatness upon earth; one who, by training and education, might be the most able to enter into his views, and to represent him here;—that he, though he were the most distinguished man that the imperial city had bred and produced, would be rejected;—would not be allowed

to see the face of our sovereign ;—would not be allowed to speak a message of peace and kindness to our people. And why ? Because he would represent a Catholic interest ; because that great sovereign Pontiff holds that religion which is the religion of millions in this land, but which still, *still* is an object of disdain and obloquy. No ! if he was an ecclesiastic like himself, if a priest, he must not be admitted !

There comes, then, from a distant part of the earth, a heathen man, one who disbelieves the mystery of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Redemption, of the Messiah, whom this nation professes to revere ; and one who labours under the imputation of the deepest guilt. He comes amongst you as the representative of a heathen master ; he comes among you as a scorner of your race ; his religious principles will not allow him to eat in your presence ! Oh ! he, that heathen, comes with bold aspect and with noble train before your christian queen, and is recognised. Ah ! but his garments were braided with gold, and he had vast sums here at his disposal, by which he could purchase wonderful products of our commerce ; and he could scatter riches, and have them well filched from him by the better ingenuity of well civilised men ; and to this heathen the first ladies of the land, the noblest dames, think it an honour to open their house, and they receive him as if he were a demi-god come from above, bringing some wonderful knowledge, or some extraordinary lesson of virtue. Oh ! but his head-dress was composed of diamonds and emeralds ! it was magnificent to behold ; it was a thing to worship. So much wealth, so much grandeur around any man ! Oh, age ! Oh, country in which we live ! The day will come when this will

be spoken of in scorn. You, Time, that boasted of a higher moral standard ! You, Land, that has always claimed that you possess a scriptural, and a biblical, and a pure and spotless religion ! thus ye worship gold upon the heathen, while you scorn the Christian Pontiff.

My Brethren, for a religion like ours, which demands self-denial,—the embracing of which destroys human prospects, and, in almost every instance, is attended or followed by the utter destruction of human hopes,—for such a religion, which teaches men to give up all and take the Cross instead, to have made progress in an age like this ; not to have fought, but to have calmly worked its way, amidst all the pushing efforts of the thousands who are bent entirely upon worldly interests, and who scorn every man who has not his God upon this earth ! Oh ! it has been the work of the one Lord of Hosts, of the one Saviour—the meek Saviour triumphant, who came into the worldly Jerusalem mounted upon an ass ; it has been the work of God, not of man. Oh ! not our right hand hath done this, but the Almighty, the Unconquerable, and He who brought forth His Israel from Egypt.

In fine, my Brethren, not to detain you too long, the progress of our holy religion has taken place in the very face of an opposition most new in its character, such as never before had met it in its career. Whatever opposition it had encountered before, had been the opposition of hatred ; but in these later times, it may appear strange, and a paradox, to say, that it has had to encounter the opposition of love ; not of love for Her, but of love for other things, which have, as a phantom, raised themselves to engage that love which otherwise she might have converted Her

former enemies unto. It is known, that in former times, there was comparatively but little energy in those who considered it their principal duty to keep the Catholic Church depressed in this country. I speak only the praise of those to whom I allude, when I say, that in the generation now passed, the clergy, for instance, of the Established Church, were men who comparatively despised ecclesiastical or theological attainments; they were men addicted more to the pleasures of this world than to the duties of their situations; there was but little research amongst them, especially after the period of their education, into the records of antiquity, or into the more abstract topics of speculative theology; but in our times that has not been so, but, on the contrary, we must acknowledge that a great, and, as far as human prudence could have conjectured to us, a most unprofitable, and a most dangerous change has taken place in this respect, and we have all of us borne open testimony, again and again, to the earnestness with which now so many of that clergy pursue their office and its duties. With what learning and ingenuity they endeavour to make a plausible theory of their religious system; how ably they have brought forth and marshalled against us every objection of past times, and many not formerly imagined; and how they have kept a vigilance over their flocks, and have endeavoured to prevent any one from straying away, and following the teaching of what they considered only usurping pastors. And yet, it is in the face of this more systematic, this more able, this more energetic resistance to the progress of Catholicity that our religion has made its way; and what must not be forgotten, has made its

way even by the very instrumentality of those means that have been intended to oppose its course. It is not necessary for me, my Brethren, to enumerate before you the numbers of those who have turned, of late years, back to the old paths; who have entered into the fold of the Church from among the most active in opposing Catholic claims by their research and by their genius, whom we may count among our very ablest defenders,—those who, formerly, we had the most reason to fear as our most serious, our most determined opponents. It is not necessary that I should mention how many have joined us from every profession which naturally tends to make the intellect more keen, or to give greater power of logical deduction, and accurate investigation,—from the bar, from the medical profession, from every walk of literature and art;—not one but has yielded to us some of its most honoured members, and such as we now feel it a consolation to see constantly at our side. Then the progress made by our religion with so little effort on our parts, with so little power of coping with these various obstacles, cannot be our own work; for here again, my Brethren, allow me most solemnly to protest, that looking at whatever Catholics may have done, there is nothing commensurate with the progress made by religion, and the farther development of it, which we have every reason to expect. We have not been able to bring up our education to anything like the standard which we might desire; and it may have pleased God to permit this, in order that it might be shown, that now, as in the time of the Apostles, the foolish and weak things, the things that are naught in this world, He hath chosen, that He may confound the wise and the strong.

The praise, then, the glory of all that has happened, belongs to God, and to God alone. The generations that shall come, looking back and seeing how especially we were favoured by Divine Providence, and blessed in this way,—that without effort, without aught done by ourselves, we have been shown the great power of God, the triumphant might of His Church, will envy us, perhaps, in their struggles, and say: How consoling, how encouraging must it have been to the Catholics of those days, to see thus visibly the hand of God doing His own work, in the midst of them. And if we contrast what now is, with that which was at an earlier period when we began, we shall find, indeed, that then our fathers were as helpless, and in condition as hopeless, as were the children of Israel when in their Babylonian captivity. So, likewise, when by that extraordinary act of Providential interference which I have described, they were brought here, and cast amidst their brethren, without any ordinary means wherewith to begin their work, they felt that they had to rebuild that which their fathers had been scarcely able to do in the course of several generations and with most liberal and magnificent assistance, they were still in the position of those same Israelites, when they found themselves ordered to build up the walls of Jerusalem, with the sword in one hand and the implements of labour in the other; and, as there, the pious Jew recognized, that not only in the deliverance from his captivity and restoration to his native soil, but likewise, in the subsequent protection and assistance which enabled him to rebuild the holy city and its temple, the hand of God was manifest. So must we, the Catholics of England, give glory to God, and

praise Him with all our hearts, that not only did He bring us forth from that state of bondage and depression in which our fathers languished, but He has since, we know not how,—I again repeat,—given us the means, or rather, has Himself done this great work that has been accomplished amongst us.

When we look back to the course of this history, should we be surprised had a modern historian, in giving us an account of the decline and fall of Catholicity in this country, described it in some such words as these. In speaking of the close of the last century, he might certainly have said: “Until now, the Catholic religion had been indeed the subject of constant persecution, and active measures had been necessary to keep it down. No sooner did it in any way show its head, but the Church of the country, ever vigilant to prevent the slightest growth of its dangerous opponent, immediately aimed a new blow, and cut the new aspiring branch to the root. A plot was invented, a charge against some individual was easily made, a jury was found to condemn some obnoxious or dangerous missionary, and confiscation and the scaffold soon removed those who appeared likely in any way to raise up again that which had been so thoroughly beaten down. And at the end of this century, the flower existed in this land, not any longer as a growing or spreading plant, but as a poor and humble weed, that crept quietly on the ground, and which no one felt would again venture to raise its head. But from this period there was no longer need of active means of oppression; humbled and struck down, as it had been, the age that ensued was too strong to permit its rising again. There came a generation then of men too busy with the active

interests of life to pursue in any respect mere speculations of an ascetic creed. There came a time when men would no longer be seduced by opinion, or by authority, but reason asserted its own ascendant, and every one thought and judged for himself too accurately to be in any danger of being misled by the mere assertions and traditions of men; and the Church, by its constant and unvarying action, keeping the whole population, as it were, like a weight upon this poor and crushed plant, would not allow it, even for an instant, to show signs of growth. And thus that which before had been struck at, and beaten, and cut, and in every way treated as a dangerous and luxuriating enemy, was now, at length, quietly trampled out of existence; and within one generation after this new great development of the genuine Protestantism of the land had appeared, the name of the Catholic was unknown, and men spoke of the Papist as of a being of an extinct race, that once had inhabited this land." Would this have been a wonderful and incredible history of the final extinction, by the pressure of these worldly energies upon that poor oppressed faith? And, instead of this, my Brethren, when we see that not only in spite of all this opposition, in spite of this depressing power, it is again once more rising high, nay, that its branches already are widely spread, and are honoured even, and esteemed by men,—when we begin to see men coming to seek shelter beneath its shade, and who have found that there has been no rest, and no refreshment to them underneath the other plant, can we say otherwise than that this sudden change, without effort from man, without the exercise of skill, or energy, or

power, has been the independent work of God, and of God alone?

Then if so, I entreat you let it continue so to be ; use every energy that God has given you ; exert every power ;—for what ? to make yourselves worthy of the continuance of that Divine and Providential care. Think not that by taking the sword or brand in hand you will overcome your enemies. Take the trumpets of Jubilee, and sing ye the praises of God, and bear His holy tabernacle round the walls of your temple, if you cannot around the walls of the city, and they shall fall before you, but they shall fall that you may pour in with blessings, and not with destruction. Yes, my Catholic Brethren, address yourselves principally and chiefly to this,—to the work of your own greater sanctification. Increase your prayers, multiply your communions, energize every power of your soul when you raise it to God, that you may speak from your hearts to Him when you pray for His blessings upon your country. Let your example shine forth all around you, and furnish models of every social, every domestic, and every christian virtue. Let men see that your faith is not a dead, nor a dying faith ; but a living, and stirring, and active, and energetic faith ; one which seeks to fulfil every point of the law ;—one which embraces with more than filial affection and confidence, every single doctrine of your church ;—one which is not ashamed, and blushes not before those tenderer doctrines, those which come more to the affections of men, and which none other are capable of feeling but ourselves, which are too often misunderstood, and made the subject of scorn and disregard. O ! show your faith to be this ; show it forth in the great works of your

charity, in the promotion of education, in the care of the poor, in providing for the widow and orphan, in all else by which you know that God is propitiated and pleased; and I will promise you that what has been done, that what you have seen, is but a small beginning of the great and mighty works which will be accomplished by God, who increases ever His benefits in proportion as we increase our efforts to deserve them, and who will go on adding blessing to blessing. He will make up to us in this our generation for all that our fathers suffered, and for all that their sufferings led them to obtain for us; and we shall rejoice in having bestowed upon us the great and longing desire of our hearts, the return of this, our country, to the unity of our holy faith and Church. Oh, Almighty God, from whom alone we have received all our past blessings, before whom we can stand only as mute admirers of the grandeur of Thy providence, of the beauty of Thy graciousness, of the magnitude of Thy mercies in our regards—O teach us that humble gratitude, that unboasting thankfulness towards Thee, which sees in Thee alone the source and author of all the good that has befallen us; and if we, on our parts, have not corresponded as we in our generation ought to have done, with these Thy magnificent providences, Oh, visit not upon us, nor upon our children, this our past neglect. Take from us all excuse, all power of lifting up a boastful voice; and let all that shall come hereafter read, as we do, the wonders of that mercy, and may the next generation, with accumulated graces and ever increasing favour, be only astonished and surprised that we, in whom the beginning of all these things took place, did not exert ourselves to

deserve more and greater things. But this, at least, let them be able to say, that happy and blessed were the eyes that could see the things that were seen in our generation, namely, that wonderful beginning and increase of virtue, and of piety, and devotion, with which the Catholics of this country hail, and return with humble gratitude for the great dealings of merciful Providence in their regard; and grant that these our humble acknowledgements may have with Thee this effect, at least,—increasing for them those blessings by which Thou hast been pleased to make this our generation glorious and great.

